



**NOTICE OF DETERMINATION**  
**CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION**  
**MODULE 6 - BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS**

**Introduction**

1. In my [Opening Statement](#) on 21 July 2022, I explained that Modules would be announced and opened in sequence, with those wishing to take a formal role in the Inquiry invited to apply to become Core Participants for each module. On 12 December 2023 the Inquiry opened Module 6 and invited anyone who wished to be considered as a Core Participant to that Module to submit an application in writing to the Solicitor to the Inquiry by 19 January 2024.
2. On 18 January 2024 the Inquiry received an application from the British Association of Social Workers (“the Applicant”) for Core Participant status in Module 6. This Notice sets out my determination of the application.
3. The Inquiry has published the [Provisional Outline of Scope](#) for Module 6, which states that this module will examine the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the publicly and privately funded adult social care sector (the “Care Sector”) in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Further modules will be announced and opened in due course, to address other aspects of the Inquiry’s Terms of Reference.

**Application**

4. Applications for Core Participant status are considered in accordance with Rule 5 of the Inquiry Rules 2006, which provides:

*5.—(1) The chairman may designate a person as a core participant at any time during the course of the inquiry, provided that person consents to being so designated.*

*(2) In deciding whether to designate a person as a core participant, the chairman must in particular consider whether—*

- (a) the person played, or may have played, a direct and significant role in relation to the matters to which the inquiry relates;*
- (b) the person has a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which the inquiry relates; or*
- (c) the person may be subject to explicit or significant criticism during the inquiry proceedings or in the report, or in any interim report.*

*(3) A person ceases to be a core participant on—*

- (a) the date specified by the chairman in writing; or*
- (b) the end of the inquiry.*

5. In accordance with the approach set out in my Opening Statement and the Inquiry's [Core Participant Protocol](#), I considered whether the application fulfils the requirements set out in Rule 5(2) in relation to the issues set out in the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 6.

### **Summary of Application**

6. The Applicant is the professional association for social work and social workers in the UK and has over 22,000 members. The Applicant submits that Rule 5(2)(b) of the Inquiry Rules 2006 are relevant to its application for Core Participant status as social workers played a key role in many aspects of adult social care and continued their work throughout the period of the Covid-19 pandemic. The application notes that social workers work with the most vulnerable adults and families in society, including many falling within the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 6. Further, it is stated that restrictions introduced had an enormous impact on the ability of social workers to discharge their duties and limited the oversight social workers were able to exercise regarding care and treatment arrangements. Social workers were also prevented from visiting care home residents by guidance, leading to concern about safeguarding, well being and hampering the ability to conduct assessments of care. Particular concerns are identified with regards to the care for adults with mental capacity issues.
7. The application also records that the Applicant has a repository of information, guidance and survey evidence which could usefully inform the work of the Inquiry.

## Decision for the Applicant

8. I have considered carefully this application and having done so, I have decided to designate the Applicant as a Core Participant in Module 6. The application is based on having a significant interest in those matters (Rule 5(2)(b)).
9. Module 6 will consider the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the adult social care sector in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This will include consideration of the consequences of government decision making on those living in adult care and residential homes and those receiving care at home. It will also address the steps taken in adult care and residential homes to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and examine the capacity of the adult care sector to respond to the pandemic. The module will also consider the impact of the pandemic on residents and their loved ones and the impact on staff working within the adult care sector.
10. The application is made on the basis that the Applicant has a significant interest in important aspects of the matters to which Module 6 relates (Rule 5(2)(b)). I have considered with great care everything that is said in the application. For a number of reasons I consider that the Applicant is well placed to assist the Inquiry to achieve its aims in Module 6. I have therefore decided in the exercise of my discretion to designate the Applicant as a Core Participant in Module 6.

## Legal Representation

11. Applications for designation as the Recognised Legal Representative of a Core Participant are governed by Rules 6 and 7 of the Inquiry Rules 2006, which provide:

*6.—(1) Where—*

- (a) a core participant, other than a core participant referred to in rule 7; or*
- (b) any other person required or permitted to give evidence or produce documents during the course of the inquiry,*  
*has appointed a qualified lawyer to act on that person's behalf, the chairman must designate that lawyer as that person's recognised legal representative in respect of the inquiry proceedings.*

*7.—(1) This rule applies where there are two or more core participants, each of whom seeks to be legally represented, and the chairman considers that—*

- (a) their interests in the outcome of the inquiry are similar;*
- (b) the facts they are likely to rely on in the course of the inquiry are similar; and*
- (c) it is fair and proper for them to be jointly represented.*

*(2) The chairman must direct that those core participants shall be represented by a single recognised legal representative, and the chairman may designate a qualified lawyer for that purpose.*

*(3) Subject to paragraph (4), any designation must be agreed by the core participants in question.*

*(4) If no agreement on a designation is forthcoming within a reasonable period, the chairman may designate an appropriate lawyer who, in his opinion, has sufficient knowledge and experience to act in this capacity.*

12. The Applicant is invited to confirm the identity of its recognised legal representative, in accordance with Rule 6(1), by **12pm Thursday 15 February 2024**.

13. Directions will be given in relation to applications for an award under section 40(1)(b) of the Inquiries Act 2005 of expenses to be incurred in respect of legal representation, at the forthcoming preliminary hearing. I will determine any such applications in accordance with the provisions of section 40 of the Inquiries Act 2005, the Inquiry Rules 2006, the [Prime Minister's determination](#) under section 40(4) and the [Inquiry' Costs Protocol](#).

**Rt Hon Baroness Heather Hallett DBE**

**Chair of the UK Covid-19 Inquiry**

**8 February 2024**